

## Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, 22/7/2012, Holy Trinity

Last Sunday, I gave you some thoughts and examples of the practical side of prayer.

I admitted to some of my difficulties in prayer.

My lack of concentration is one of those difficulties: wandering thoughts invade at the proverbial drop of a hat.

I need to gently push them aside knowing that I will come back to them later.

If you were not here last Sunday you can read my thoughts from last week under Sermons on the parish website and this will bring you up to date.

Last week's thoughts were using our senses of sight and voice.

We are, however, more than eyes and tongue. We are a whole person and it is the whole person that is offered to God in prayer.

How can we use the rest of our bodies as part of our prayers?

When I was growing up posture was very important in prayer.

The principle that was applied to worship in church was to stand for praise, to sit for instruction and to kneel for prayer which was basically the rest of the service.

In this day and age, the kneeling part of the service is not practised in many cases.

Nevertheless, the posture of the body is still used.

When you come into the church you sit.

Your body is in a position for the prayer of quietness or silence in the presence of God in preparation for the act of worship in which you will take your place in whole drama of the Eucharist.

Then you stand offering your whole body in praise, whether in the singing of the hymns or in the spoken word.

When the sanctuary party of priests and lay assistants comes in, before entering the sanctuary area they pause and bow towards the altar.

This is certainly no act of idolatry.

This is acknowledging the altar as the place at which the drama of the Eucharist takes place.

This is the quiet use of the body in prayer.

Some may genuflect as they come into the church or when they are coming up to receive communion.

This again is the quiet use of the body in prayer to Jesus present under the forms of Bread and Wine, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Then again we use our body especially arm and hand in making the sign of the Cross.

This is the symbol with which we were marked at our baptism.

So in the making of the sign of the Cross on ourselves we are offering a prayer that we may keep our baptismal promises and live the baptismal life.

Or, I have a mind with which to think of God, a heart to love God and two shoulders to work for God.

Whichever way you look at it the making of the sign of the Cross is still a prayer.

At the announcement of the Gospel the priest signs four crosses, one on the Gospel book where the reading is to begin, then one on the forehead another on the lips and another on the chest.

This implies a mind with which to understand the Gospel, a mouth with which to preach the Gospel and a heart with which to love the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even in the use of our body to wash ourselves we have a prayer, reminding us of our baptism and of water to wash away sin and for our endeavour to live the baptismal life.

Even in the great outdoors the body can be used in quiet prayer.

In hugging a tree or feeling the bark or even a leaf, the body is used as a prayer for the preservation of creation and of thanksgiving for the Creativity of God.

So you can see that your prayer is holistic using mind, body and spirit and each is important in your prayers.

Take on board your whole self in prayer as you develop your relationship with God in prayer.